

9/25/06 - (12)

John Murray

From: Lauren Rosenzweig
Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2006 12:32 PM
To: Don Johnson; John Murray
Cc: Walter Foster (office); Transportation Advisory Committee; Roland Bartl; abuw@abuw.org
Subject: Suburban Mobility Grant Draft Letter of Interest

The draft letter below is necessary to submit as soon as possible, so that if we are interested in pursuing a shuttle this year we can get in the "queue" for any federal and state funds through this program. Please read it over. It is essential for this to be on the agenda for this meeting. I have been informed that Letters of Interest need to be in before the first week in October.

Thanks.

Lauren

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Barbara Lucas, Chair
Suburban Mobility Subcommittee
Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee
Attn: Suburban Mobility Program
c/o CTPS
10 Park Plaza, Suite 2150
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Ms. Lucas,

The Town of Acton is very interested in applying for a Suburban Mobility Grant to initiate a flexible suburban transportation system. Our citizens are realizing that single-use automobile transportation will not be sustainable as our region becomes more and more populated. The Commonwealth has recognized this need, and there have been great improvements in service to and from Boston via the Fitchburg Line Commuter Rail. An express train to Boston in the morning and a return express train to South Acton in the evening have been very popular. This has led to increased ridership, especially on these trains. However, many of our citizens drive to the station and park their car for the day. This has led to a shortage of parking for later trains, though space is available at the next station in West Concord which the express passes by. Acton participated in the Suburban Transit Opportunities Study conducted by the MPO/CTPS which recognized this need and made excellent recommendations on methods for how to begin a suburban shuttle bus or van service. At a well attended Commuter Rail Public Forum earlier this year, residents of Acton and its surrounding towns expressed that shuttle service to the train would be a high priority to help alleviate the parking difficulties at the station.

In addition, surveys and anecdotal feedback of the Board of the United Way of Acton and Boxborough, found that transportation options were needed for a variety of populations in our towns and that many people remained isolated in their homes due to lack of appropriate transportation. These populations included:

- 1) Adolescents who were too young to drive and had the desire to attend clubs and activities. Many could not do so because they had two working parents or single parents who worked and they had no transportation.
- 2) Grandparents who lived with their working children, but had no car of their own, or could not drive due to language barriers or other factors

- 3)The elderly (the current van service level is seen as not providing enough flexibility)
- 4)The disabled (the current van service level is seen as not providing enough flexibility)
- 5)New immigrants to this country

We envision a shuttle service similar to "The Local Connection (TLC)" service recently begun in Southborough and Marlborough. The focus in the morning and evening would be on commuters, and in the interim hours would service the needs described above.

We are seeking your expertise in helping us to plan such a Suburban Transit Program, as well as identify a variety of funding sources and partnership opportunities that we may pursue to help us in this endeavor. We are willing to reach out to our nearby towns, and to engage our very active business communities to address this need. We look forward to meeting with you to learn more about the Suburban Mobility Program and how to complete an application.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Lauren S. Rosenzweig
Selectmen Liaison
Acton Transportation Advisory Committee

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